#### Ontological starting points of identity based on language and experience is intrinsically biased and excludes feminine bodies by replicating their alienation. Construction of ontology has relegated women to a status of ‘theoretically mute’ and only replicates the marginalization – only severing from past uses of linguistics will allow women to establish their own language distinctly representing their own experience

Crary 01 (Alice, "A Question of Silence: Feminist Theory and Women's Voices." Philosophy 76.03 (2001): n. pag. Web. 11 Feb. 2017. Crary is a professor of philosophy at Harvard) pg. 375-378

Women's experience, even when its relevance is acknowledged, may be portrayed in a way which is intrinsically biased. Feminist epistemology tends to start by claiming to speak to, and for, the pathos of women's descriptions of their feelings of alienation. It wishes to go on from this starting point and take account of the fact that historically and for the most part, not only have women not generally participated directly in the production of our body of knowledge, but they have also not participated in activities of theorizing about our body of knowledge. They have not taken part in those second-order activities which bequeath to us our image of knowledge.9 Women have, for the most part, remained theoretically and philosophically mute. Feminist epistemology (or feminist theory more generally) often presents itself as a vehicle through which women can come to find their own voices. It therefore naturally tends to take as its point of departure this sort of discussion of ways in which prevailing theoretical discourses have failed to engage women's voices. Perceptions (such as those just touched upon) of the historical irrelevance of women's experience to prevailing activities of theory- construction sometimes get coupled with a more general epistemological insight which does not itself turn on feminist pre- occupations: viz., that what a person takes from particular experiences is not written into the experiences themselves; that, from early childhood on, over the course of our cultural education, we learn to take experience as bearing on knowledge in many different ways. Feminist theorists have been particularly concerned to further specify the implications of this broad epistemological insight by bringing into relief the manner in which certain sorts of personal characteristics of knowers (such as gender, sexual orientation, race and class) can affect the way in which experience is taken to bear on knowledge. They tend to begin therefore with the following epistemologically relatively innocuous perception:1 As women, homosexuals, blacks, or members of the working class (etc.) we are socialized in ways which are specific to our 'group' or 'groups'; the manner in which we then incorporate our experience will reflect this difference in socialization. It is at this point that the particular strain of feminist theory I am concerned with begins to depart from a genuine responsiveness to women s voices. This epistemologically innocuous perception is often taken to support the suspicious-but epistemologically still potentially quite innocuous-claim that instances of androcentrism in discourse constitute evidence that all our discursive practices only reflect ways in which men incorporate their experience. It is in their manner of going on from this already suspicious claim that the feminist arguments I am concerned with diverge most dramatically from responsiveness to things that women say in recounting their experience and become driven by a kind of philosophical insistence. It is characteristic of these arguments to move from this claim (which is consistent with the perception that ways in which we take experience as bearing on knowledge reflect differences in our socialization) directly-and without acknowledging that any philosophically momentous step is being taken-to the following considerably less innocuous claim: Instances of androcentrism in language and theory constitute evidence that our language and theories-and, ultimately, all of our dominant bodies of knowledge-only reflect distinctly male experience. Some feminists who present themselves as beginning with the innocuous epistemological insight wind up advocating the claim that our current forms of knowledge are suited only to the task of incorporating the character of 'male experience', and that we currently lack a theoretical discourse at all adequate to the task of incorporating 'female experience'. It is an assumption of this claim that female experience is thoroughly and systematically different from male experience, where this means that women's and men's experience are in a strong sense incommensurable:12 women and men should be understood as perceiving and inhabiting logically separate 'realities'; 'male' language expresses distinctly male experience to the exclusion of distinctly female experience." This claim thus carries the suggestion that women should establish their own language (now one which would reflect distinctly 'female' experience), and it implies that this project will involve rejecting the concepts, theories and methodologies which have been integral to 'male' theory construction-including the very notions of objectivity, experience and rationality which are themselves thought by some feminist theorists to presuppose a masculine way of knowing the world. Some theorists go on from this already less than innocuous argument to claim that there can therefore be no such thing as an impersonal theory of knowledge or language. What once looked like the possibility of such a theory must now be given up on the grounds that it illicitly presupposes a gender neutral standpoint from which the theory can encounter its subject-matter. What some theorists see as the necessary intrusion of personal characteristics of the knower into both the structure and content of what is known is taken by them to demonstrate the impossibility of any attempt to construct a theory of what others have thought of as the 'language which we (women and men) share'.

#### Framing arguments from the standpoint of linguistic ontology commodify the feminine experience in an essentializing position of privilege

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The arguments I am concerned with begin with an innocuous general insight about the social context of knowledge. They underline the fact that we are socialized into certain norms and describe ways in which our experience is mediated by these norms. This insight is then often elaborated into the thought that gender (as opposed to sex which is often taken to be biologically determinative) is socially constructed. This strain of feminist thought is at odds with another feminist position, one which does not take a sociological perspective on gender but rather embraces an essentialist view, a view asserting that women simply experience things differently from men (and vice-versa). Some feminist arguments that explicitly claim to embrace the former sociological perspective and reject the latter essentialist one are nevertheless implicitly committed to some version of the latter. Some theorists have wanted to build on a relatively innocuous version of the sociological insight to go on to argue that our current forms of knowledge are adequate only to the task of incorporating distinctly male experience. As we saw, it is an implicit assumption of this claim that female experience is thoroughly and systematically different from male experience and this is just what feminists (and others, including various kinds of misogynist thinkers) who are essentialists about gender have hoped to show. This perception of ways in which our experience is mediated by social norms, when it is taken to show that our body of knowledge must be thoroughly and systematically pervaded by a masculine bias, thus becomes intertwined with an essentialist position with which it is deeply in tension. (Many feminist theorists whose work is threatened by this tension fail to notice it because they waffle between two senses in which one might understand the claim that 'female experience differs systematically from male experience'. They trade on the ambiguity between saying that women's experience tends to differ in systematic ways from men's experience (because women's and men's experience are both mediated by social norms which differentiate systematically between women and men) and saying that it is constitutive of women's experience and men's experience that they be systematically different (because it is essential to what it is to be a woman and what it is to be a man that each experience things differently).) These kinds of arguments therefore leave themselves open to criticisms that have been made of essentialist arguments about gender. In tacitly assuming that women's and men's experience are essentially different, they suggest that there are some features of women's experience which cannot be influenced by socialization. And they incline toward the suggestion that women's experience (or 'women's intuition') is self-validating: it is unquestionably valid because beyond the reach of any social or individual forces. Without some independent argument (i.e., an argument for why social differentiation with respect to gender is of an epistemologically privileged kind), this move, which places a fundamental division between women's and men's experience, threatens to make room for further fundamental divisions along lines other than gender-e.g., among groups of women from different backgrounds. It welcomes a splintering of what might be called 'women's reality' into numerous separate 'realities' for women of different races, classes, sexual orientations, ethnicities or religions (each of whom may, on this line of thought, be presumed to inhabit their own self-validating 'reality'). It suggests that there are a priori obstacles blocking communication between diverse groups of women as well as between women and men. This strain of feminist theory thus veers toward the conclusion that true communication between persons with significantly different personal characteristics is impossible.

#### The role of the ballot is to endorse the debater that best creates a liberatory pedagogy. Changing the way we teach and learn is what enables hope for oppressed bodies to be able to overcome the hetero-patriarchy. Every ballot is an endorsement of a form of education, where only the criticism shifts away from colonial whiteness and sexism in educational spaces like debate

hooks 13 (hooks, bell\*. *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*, “Teach 1: The Will to Learn”. 08-21-2013. Taylor and Francis. pp. 4-8 //Accessed 2/15/17 GK \*bell hooks is an acclaimed intellectual, feminist theorist, cultural critic, artist, and writer. hooks has authored over three dozen books and has published works that span several genres, including cultural criticism, personal memoirs, poetry collections, and children's books. Her writings cover topics of gender, race, class, spirituality, teaching, and the significance of media in contemporary culture.)

Feminist intervention was amazingly successful when it came to changing academic curriculum. For example, it was not Black Studies which led to the recovery of previously unrecognized black women writers like Zora Neale Hurston. Feminist scholars, and this includes black women, were the ones who resurrected “herstory,” calling attention to patriarchal exclusion of women and thus creating the awareness that led to greater inclusion. Even though I began my teaching in Black Studies, the courses I taught that were always packed with students (I had to turn students away) were those focused on women writers. **The feminist challenge to patriarchal curriculum and patriarchal teaching practices completely altered the classroom. Since colleges and universities rely on students “buying” the commodity “courses” to survive, as more students flocked to courses where teaching practices as well as curriculum were not biased, where education as the practice of freedom was more the norm, the authority of the traditional white male power structure was being successfully undermined**. By joining the campaign to change the curriculum, white males were able to maintain their positions of power. For example, if a racist patriarchal English professor teaching a course on William Faulkner that was a required course with many students attending, had to compete with a similar course being taught by a feminist anti-racist professor, his class could end up with no students. Hence it was in the interest of his survival for him to revise his perspective, **at least to include a discussion of gender or a feminist analysis**. As an insurrection of subjugated knowledges, feminist interventions within the academic world had greater impact than Black Studies because white women could appeal to the larger, white female student population. From the onset Black Studies mainly addressed a student constituency made up of black students; feminist studies from the onset addressed white students. Even though Women’s Studies courses initially attracted mostly white female students, usually those with some degree of radical consciousness, as gender equality became more an accepted norm the feminist classroom has grown larger and has attracted a diverse body of white students and students of color. Significantly, feminist professors, unlike most non-feminist Black Studies professors, were much more innovative and progressive in their teaching styles. Students often flocked in droves to feminist classrooms because the schooling there was simply more academically compelling. If this had not been the case it would not have become necessary for mainstream conservative white academics, female and male, to launch a backlash that maligned the Women’s Studies classroom, falsely presenting it as teaching students that they did not need to study anything by white males and insisting that students really had to do no work in these classes. By devaluing the feminist classroom they made students feel that they would appear academically suspect if they majored in these alternative disciplines. Of course, the feminist classroom was a rigorous place of learning, and as a bonus the teaching style in such classrooms was often less conventional. No matter the intensity of anti-feminist backlash or conservative efforts to dismantle Black Studies and Women’s Studies programs, the interventions had taken place and had created enormous changes. As individual black women/women of color, along with individual white women allies in anti-racist struggle, brought a critique of race and racism into feminist thinking that transformed feminist scholarship, many of the concerns of Black Studies were addressed through a partnership with Women’s Studies and through feminist scholarship. Over time, as the academy shifted, making the reforms needed to embrace inclusion—gender equality and diversity—feminist and/or black scholars were not necessarily situated only in alternative programs. The mainstreaming of progressive feminist professors and/or black professors/professors of color— that is, taking them out of the “ghetto” of Women’s Studies or Ethnic Studies (which happened because white men wanted to regain their control over these disciplines)—gave them backcontrol, but it also meant that it brought dissident voices into the conventional disciplines. Those voices changed the nature of academic discourse. Very little praise is given Women’s Studies, Black Studies/Ethnic Studies, for the amazing changes these disciplines spearheaded in higher education. When progressive white men created the alternative discipline of cultural studies, teaching from progressive standpoints, the success of their programs tended to overshadow the powerful interventions made by women and men of color simply because of the way white-supremacist thinking and practice rewards white male interventions while making it appear that the progressive interventions made by women and men of color are not as important. Since cultural studies often included recognition of race and gender, even as it allowed for the maintenance of the hegemony of white male presence, it unwittingly became one of the forces that led colleges and universities to dismantle Ethnic Studies and Women’s Studies programs with the argument that they were simply no longer needed. The overall mainstreaming of alternative disciplines and alternative perspectives was a tactic deployed to take away the concrete locations of power where different policy and educational strategy could be enacted because folks did not have to rely on the conservative mainstream for promotion and tenure. Well, all that has changed. Successful backlash undermining progressive changes has changed things back to the way they were. White male rule is intact. All over our nation, Women’s Studies and Ethnic Studies’ programs have been ruthlessly dismantled. Conservative manipulation of mass media has successfully encouraged parents and students to fear alternative ways of thinking, to believe that simply taking a Women’s Studies course or an Ethnic Studies course will lead to failure, to not getting a job. These tactics have harmed the movement for progressive education as the practice of freedom, but they have not changed the reality that incredible progress wasmade. In Teaching Values Ron Scapp reminds us: “**The antagonism toward and fear of those who ‘question’ had a long (and violent) history. That those asking questions today and rejecting the ‘givens’ of our cultural history are seen as pariahs and are under attack should also not be ‘surprising.**’ ” Scapp calls attention to the fact that the folks who resist progressive educational reform “are quick to dismiss or discredit (and sometimes destroy),” but this does not alter the fact that there has been a powerful meaningful insurrection of subjugated knowledges that is liberating and life-sustaining. Struggles for gender equality and ethnic diversity linked issues of ending domination, of social justice with pedagogy. The classroom was transformed. The critique of canons allowed the voices of visionary intellectuals to be heard. Gayatri Spivak brilliantly challenged the notions that only citizens of this nation can know and understand the importance of the traditional canon. Daringly she states: “The matter of the literary canon is in fact a political matter: securing authority.” In Outside in the Teaching Machine she explains the importance of “transnational literacy,” starting with a discussion of the high school classroom. Writing about the canon, Spivak contends that she “must speak from within the debate over the teaching of canon,” from a perspective informed by postcolonial awareness of the need to create justice in education: “There can be no general theory of canons. Canons are the condition of institutions and the effect of institutions. Canons secure institutions as institutions secure canons . . . Since it is indubitably the case that there is no expansion without contraction . . . [W]e must make room for the coordinated teaching of the new entries into the canon. When I bring this up, I hear stories of how undergraduates have told their teachers that a whole semester of Shakespeare, or Milton, or Chaucer, changed their lives. I do not doubt these stories, but we have to do a quality/quantity shift if we are going to canonize the new entries . . . The undergraduates will have their lives changed perhaps by a sense of the diversity of the new canon and the unacknowledged power play involved in securing the old.” Spivak’s work, emerging from a transnational, feminist, anti-racist, left critique, embodies the extraordinary genius and power of the intellectual interventions transforming the old academy

#### Liberation arguments predicated on the use of language create error replication which turns case – linguistic and epistemic practices are conceptually ‘male’ and create metaphysical underpinnings and control over the epistemic practices of language

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Consider how certain strands of feminist theory may encourage us to develop a distorted picture of women's relation to particular linguistic and epistemic practices. Feminist theorists have drawn attention to different ways in which linguistic expressions may encode a masculine bias. 'Exorcising"9 or eliminating such bias from a particular expression may afford a woman a greater sense of the compatibility between her words and her experiences. She may also find that her first discovery of bias is systematically related to other instances of bias in her forms of thought and speech. Feminist investigations have revealed some of the deeply ingrained ways in which the uses of linguistic expressions encourage what might be called 'masculinist thought'. Once the practice of referring to all people with the expressions 'man' and 'mankind' had been uncovered, feminists uncovered expressions such as 'people and their wives'20 and 'spousal consent for obtaining an abortion'. But such investigations depend for their possibility on our ability to use expressions in ways which are not 'masculinist'. Our recognition of the practice of using 'man' to refer to all people as a biased use of language depends on our being able to recognize other uses of 'man' as not biased. When theorists respond to a woman's sense of 'not being at home in her language' by recommending the wholesale rejection of 'male language',2' they presuppose that our most basic concepts of objectivity and rationality (which are seen as somehow precipitating the local biased uses of language) can, in the end, simply be rejected. They operate on the assumption that when we have gone deep enough-when we have fully corrected the masculine biases of language-we will wind up with a language which is no longer conceptually akin to our present 'male' language. We will then not merely have readjusted our forms of expression to accommodate certain feminist insights, but we will have, as it were, 'gotten outside of our 'male' skins'. Even in those cases, however, in which we can achieve a limited analogue of a wholesale rejection of things 'male' in favour of things 'female', such a gesture still will not accomplish what is intended. The affirmation of the negation of a metaphysical thesis tends to issue in another metaphysical thesis-one which partici- pates in the same picture and hence bears the image of its opposing counterpart. The theorists I am concerned to criticize here reflect on traditional metaphysical renderings of our basic everyday concepts of objectivity, rationality and experience-and accept these renderings as successfully representing the structure of these concepts and then turn on them and want to reject them as fully 'male'. This gesture of rejecting a traditional metaphysics of objectivity, rationality and experience is open to question from the fol- lowing direction. Given that the theorists who make it want to distance themselves from confused or limiting metaphysical accounts of these concepts, we need to ask whether the gesture suits their purposes. The worry is that, if our current metaphysical conceptions of rationality, experience and objectivity are understood as presupposing what is 'male' as a norm for all humans, and if we attempt sim- ply to affirm the negation of these traditional metaphysical theses (imagining we are thereby exchanging 'male' basic concepts for 'female' ones), then we end up simply maintaining the structures of that 'male' metaphysics, reflected now in the mirror-image of its antitheses. Mere denial of the validity of what some philosophers have seen as the metaphysical underpinnings of our most basic concepts will not amount to a dismantling of that tradition. In simply denying some of the central tenets of traditional metaphysics, some theorists recognize it as advancing straightforward tenets which can be denied and thereby limit themselves to a space of alternatives whose dimensions are determined by that tradition. Denial of the correctness of a traditional metaphysical thesis in a sense simply rehearses a moment within the tradition.22 Certain kinds of feminist arguments legitimize traditional ('male') metaphysics in their very attempt to reject it.

#### We cant decentralize or liberate our language when consecutively operating in a dominated language system

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It is helpful to consider this sort of argument against the back- ground of a well known critique, developed in Wittgenstein's writings, of a prevalent and very natural view of nonsense. Wittgenstein attacks views on which combinations of words fail to make sense because the thoughts that they (try to) express are taken to be in some way impermissible or illegitimate. He stresses that, in so far as such views represent combinations of words as failing to be proper units of language on account of the nature of thoughts they (endeavour to) impart, they presuppose an understanding of the very combinations of words they portray as nonsensical. These views waver unsteadily between representing certain strings of signs as having senses we can at least vaguely make out and rejecting those same strings of signs as lacking sense. They are at least tacitly committed to drawing on a problematic category of nonsensical yet somehow also intelligible strings of signs. Wittgenstein's critique bears directly on the feminist arguments at issue here. It is a presupposition of these arguments that we are in a position to grasp the notion of 'female' thoughts although-situated as we are within a 'male' language-we are not yet in a position fully to articulate them.24 It is at least implicit in them that there are ('female') thoughts which, because of the limits of ('male') language, we are unable fully to say or think. When we formulate these ('female') thoughts in ('male') language, we necessarily fail to give full expression to their ('female') meaning. We are, nonetheless, somehow able to achieve a position from which we can discern what ('female') thoughts these as yet nonsensical sentences would be expressing if they could be properly formulated. Still we recognize that the limits of ('male') language confine us. Try as we might, we can't (as yet) fully express these ('female') thoughts. This way of understanding the significance of certain nonsensical ('female') combinations of words commits its proponents to an understanding of language as having a communicative function over and above that of saying what can be said. The nonsensical ('female') sentence does not express an intelligible thought, yet it imparts a 'meaning' in spite of its senselessness. It show us that there is something it is attempting to say even though it cannot be said-something which is, as of yet, unsayable. It is implicit in such arguments, then, that it is in some sense intelligible to discuss what a nonsensical ('female') thought attempts to express. Theorists who embrace such arguments resemble proponents of the view of nonsense Wittgenstein attacks in that they find themselves committed to a notion of intelligible nonsense. In saying that certain nonsensical ('female') sentences attempt to express things that can't be said, these theorists simultaneously use those ('female') sentences to impart something and deny that that something can be said. They tell us that the sentences are nonsense at the same time that they provide us with an apparently intelligible rendering of what it is the sentences fail to say.25